

**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
2ND MARCH 2010**

SUBJECT: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATIONS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The following applications for rate relief have been determined by the Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers (Scheme of Delegation Item 5.2(t) refers).
- 1.2 In arriving at her determination the Head of Corporate Finance has been guided by Council policy laid down by the former Finance Committee on 14 February 1996 and 30 April 1996, together with Welsh Office criteria for considering such applications.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council is able to assist a wide range of voluntary and sporting organisations by granting rate relief. This report deals with recent applications.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The granting of rate relief is a very cost effective way in which the Council can pursue its Regeneration objective by giving financial assistance to local organisations.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 BTCV Family Employment Initiative

- 4.1.1 The organisation is a registered charity which has therefore been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief in accordance with statutory provisions.
- 4.1.2 The application relates to their premises at 57 High Street, Rhymney which is used as a fitness centre/advice drop-in centre/administration office.
- 4.1.3 The organisation's main objectives are stated as investing in sustainable futures through health, conservation and breaking barriers into employment.
- 4.1.4 To achieve its health and fitness objectives BTCV encourages members of the local community to participate in a number of arranged activities which include healthy walks, green gym exercises and cycling.
- 4.1.5 In order to improve conservation and increase community involvement and awareness, the organisation undertakes a number of projects which include the restoration of abandoned rundown allotments, various gardening projects and cleaning up of riverbanks.

- 4.1.6 Also through its job and training fairs the organisation helps ensure that unemployed people acquire the personal skills necessary to enable them to obtain employment by signposting them to the people that can help them with CV writing and interview technique skills etc. BTCV also liaises with local colleges and other bodies to arrange necessary training and courses to enable recently unemployed people to retrain in other fields or acquire a credited qualification.
- 4.1.7 BTCV's services are provided free of charge and are available to all persons over 16 years of age residing in the local communities of Pontllytyn, Rhymney and Tredegar.
- 4.1.8 The current annual rate liability of the organisation's premises is £1662 and the cost to the Authority of awarding 20% discretionary top-up relief at present levels would be £249 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remainder of £83.
- 4.1.9 The Authority is currently awarding discretionary rate relief to similar community-based organisations whose focus is on community regeneration, conservation and improving the quality of life of its habitants through fitness, education and training, these include: Rhymney Community First Partnership on their premises at 38B High Street, Rhymney. Ty Sign Local Community Partnership on their premises at 79 Elm Drive, Ty Sign, Risca. Tydfil Training Consortium Ltd on their premises at 54 High Street, Blackwood.

Decision: That 20% discretionary top-up relief be awarded.

4.2 Cancer Research Wales

- 4.2.1 The organisation is a registered charity which has therefore been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief in accordance with statutory provisions.
- 4.2.2 The application relates to the organisation's shop and premises at 25 Castle Court, Caerphilly which is operated as a charity shop selling donated clothing, books, bric-a-brac etc.
- 4.2.3 The charitable objectives of the organisation are to provide and support facilities for cancer research in association with:-
- (a) Radiotherapy and chemotherapy (clinical oncology) services based within the Velindre NHS Trust.
 - (b) Other clinical oncology units based in Wales.
 - (c) The University of Wales, College of Medicine and Universities based in Wales.
- 4.2.4 Cancer Research Wales is the only totally independent cancer charity for Wales and all monies raised are spent on equipment and the highest calibre of cancer research projects which are undertaken by internationally renowned scientists, and PhD students across Wales.
- 4.2.5 For its funding the organisation relies on the generosity of the public and monies raised through charity shop sales and fundraising carried out by supporting organisations.
- 4.2.6 The current annual rate liability of its premises is £22,249 and the costs to the Authority of awarding 20% discretionary top-up relief at present levels would be £3337 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remainder of £1113.
- 4.2.7 The Authority are currently awarding 20% discretionary top-up relief to the other cancer charities operating charity shops within the Caerphilly County Borough: Cancer Research UK on its premises at 99 High Street, Blackwood and Ty Hafan the Children's Hospice in Wales on their premises at Market Street, Caerphilly and High Street, Blackwood. Cancer Research Wales was also the chosen charity for the Mayor of this Authority's 2009 fundraising appeal.

Decision: That 20% discretionary top-up relief be awarded.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no personnel implications.

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 There are no consultation responses which have not been reflected in this report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members note the decisions taken under delegated powers.

8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 To assist local voluntary organisations.

9. STATUTORY POWER

9.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

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Background Papers:
Rate Relief Application Forms